

Summary of the  
NELAC FEDERAL PARTNERS TELECONFERENCE  
March 18, 1997

The National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Conference Federal partners meeting was convened by teleconference on Tuesday, March 18, 1997, at 11:00 a.m. EST. Mr. Gary Bennett, Chair, On-Site Assessment Committee, led the meeting on the discussion of Chapter 3 of the Standards.

Ms. Jeanne Mourrain, NELAP Director, opened the discussion with a brief overview on Confidential Business Information (CBI). Mr. Bennett stated that the Committee was working hard on this section and is finalizing the language.

Mr. Bennett stated that the Assessors Training Manual is scheduled to be ready by July. The issue of the status of current assessors was discussed. Carol Batterton of the Transition ad hoc Committee asked Mr. Bennett to contact her regarding this issue.

Mr. Bennett then asked for comments on the difference section of Chapter 3 from the group. Their comments are as follows:

- 3.2.1 - The issue of “cost of training” was discussed and who would do the training. Ms. Mourrain stated that the Committee on National Accreditation of Environmental Laboratories, a federal advisory committee, recommended that the training not be done by the accrediting authority. Mr. Bennett also stated that it was not the intent of this section that on-the-job training apply to current assessors.
- 3.3.1 - Mr. Dave Alderman inquired about the cost of the reassessments. Mr. Bennett stated that any reassessments would be done at the expense of the laboratory.
- 3.3.2 - A discussion of laboratory “downgrading” ensued and the exact definition. Mr. Bennett stated that at the time this section was written the language in the Accreditation Process chapter was not finalized. It was recommended that this section be modified to agree with the language in Chapter 4.
- 3.4.2 - Mr. Alderman inquired about the general and specific types of assessment. Mr. Bennett stated that it was not the intention to have a two-step type of process, but rather the choice of the laboratory to select the assessment that meets their needs.
- 3.4.2.1 - Mr. Rogerson suggested that they should change “should” to “must” to have the first sentence read, “A laboratory assessment must review the ability of the lab to conduct environment testing.”

- 3.4.4 - Mr. Alderman recommended that foreign laboratory documents must be submitted in English. Mr. Bennett stated that all NELAC documents would be in English only, and that the committee would take under advisement his recommendation.
- 3.4.5 - A discussion of what “is” and “is not” CBI ensued. Mr. Bennett stated that each accrediting authority is ultimately responsible to determine CBI status.
- 3.5.2 - There was a discussion on “unusual or extenuating circumstances” in regard to admittance of the assessment team by the laboratory. Ms. Catherine Klusek inquired about the meaning of item (h). Mr. Bennett stated that the assessors would be using the NELAC standards to judge the adequacy of the laboratory operation.
- 3.5.4 - It was recommended that the word “may” should be changed to “should” in order to read, “. . . the assessment team should evaluate . . .”
- 3.5.6 - It was recommended that a statement be added to read, “the assessor is encouraged to leave documentation at the end of the assessment outlining the findings.”
- 3.7.5 - The question was asked as to who the report could be released to. It was noted that NIST’s NVLAP program does not provide the audit report under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) as it is considered part of the determinative process of the Agency.

Ms. Kluesk is to send a copy of the DOE checklist to Marlene Patillo of the On-Site Assessment Committee.

The next teleconference will be on April 1 at 11:00 a.m. EST. Ms. Marge Prevost will be participating and Chapter 4 will be discussed.

**Attachment A**

**ACTION ITEMS  
Federal Partners Teleconference  
March 18, 1997**

<b>Item No.</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Date Completed</b>
1.	Gary Bennett is to contact the Transition Ad Hoc Committee regarding the issue of the status of current assessors.	
2.	Catherine Kluesk is to send a copy of the DOE checklist to Marlene Patillo.	

## Attachment B

**LIST OF PARTICIPANTS**  
**Federal Partners Teleconference**  
**March 18, 1997**

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